

GRIZZLY

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MEMORIAL DAY

Major General William H. Wade II



Rudyard Kipling said, "God and the Soldier, we adore, In time of peril, not before. The peril ended, and all things righted, God is forgotten, and the Soldier slighted."

More importantly, let us not forget the words of Thomas Paine, who on December 23, 1776, penned the words, "What we obtain too cheaply; we esteem too lightly".

These words ring true on three specific American days of remembrance each year: Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. However, it is Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday in May each year, that is set aside to honor only those who paid the ultimate price for freedom and democracy while in service to our nation, and to remember that this freedom was not obtained cheaply; and therefore, should no be esteemed too lightly.

We are all familiar with General John Logan's (Grand Army of the Republic), efforts and initiative, to place flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery as a symbol of healing, reconciliation, and coming together to honor those who gave their all. Yet, we are not that knowledgeable with one of

America's best known and revered ways of honoring our fallen – the playing of Taps.

Even in war, there are times when chivalry prevails. Such a time was at the end of a battle or at the completion of the day's fighting. A cease fire would be called by both sides to allow the removal of the dead and wounded from the battlefield. Once each side had finished retrieving their dead, they would fire three volleys to indicate that they were ready to resume fighting; and this firing came to be recognized as a final salute and farewell to fallen comrades.

During the Peninsular Campaign of 1862, a Soldier of Battery A, 2nd Artillery, Union Forces, was buried at a time when the battery occupied an advanced position concealed in the woods. Because of their close proximity to the enemy, it was unsafe to fire the customary three volleys over the grave. The commander of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac (General Daniel Butterfield), reworked another bugle call – the "Scott Tattoo" – with his bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton, to create "Taps" as a tribute to his fallen Soldier; because General Butterfield felt the regular call for Lights Out or Extinguish Lights, was too formal. In

time, Taps was adopted throughout the Army of the Potomac and was eventually confirmed by orders as the official bugle call for honoring the fallen. Soon, other Union units began using Taps, and even a few Confederate units started using it as well. After the war, Taps became an official bugle call.

Taps consists of – very simply – 24 musical notes that tend to drill into the deepest emotions of even the most stoic listener. Although there are no official words to Taps, there are five popularly accepted stanzas. As you hear the haunting melody of Taps played forever more, think about these words and their profound meaning?

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the hills, from the lake, from the skies.
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the Soldier or the Sailor, God keep.
On the land, or the deep, Safe in sleep.

Love, good night; must thou go,
When the day, and the night, need thee so?

All is well, speedeth all, to their rest.
Fades the light, and afar,

Goeth day, and the stars shineth bright,
Fare thee well, day is gone,
Night is on.

Thanks and praise, for our days,
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky,
As we go, this we know,
God is nigh.

As you observe this Memorial Day, and every Memorial Day to come, do not forget, nor let your children – or their children – forget, the ultimate sacrifice made by so many warriors who have gone before us. Because they paid the price with their lives, we bask in the sunshine of liberty; because of their unselfish devotion to honor, duty, and country, we reap the benefits of the freedoms and rights they fought for; and because they made the ultimate sacrifice, we enjoy the fruits of democracy and the rule of law.

May each one rest in eternal peace – because they have truly earned it.



DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Command Sergeant Major William Clark Jr.

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who

have died in serving their nation. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, National Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No.11. Today, we continue a day of remembrance on Memorial Day for those who have died for this nation.

As we remember our fallen comrades at arms, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers on

Memorial Day, we must also remember all of our service men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice to their state and nation during past wars and our current conflict. What can we do in remembrance of our fallen heroes on Memorial Day? We can visit cemeteries and place flags or flowers on the graves of our fallen heroes. We can visit memorials throughout our towns, cities, states and nation in remembrance. Flying the "POW/MIA Flag" (Section 1082 of the 1988 Defense authorization Act). Participate in the National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 to pause and

remember the true meaning of Memorial Day. Today, in the current conflict, our servicemembers continue to give the ultimate sacrifice. Our servicemembers continue to answer the call to duty. We must continue to support the Families of our fallen heroes and never forget their contributions to our nation.

We must continue to support and aid the widows, widowers, and orphans of our fallen service men and women. We must never forget our disabled veterans who continue to face challenges today and into the future. Harry Truman once said:

"I think I know the American soldier..... He does not want gratitude or sympathy. He had a job to do. He did not like it. But he did it. And how he did it. Now he wants to come back home and start again the life he loved....."

On Memorial Day, take time to participate in a Memorial Day observance. We must never forget our fallen servicemembers.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The at-a-glance section this month highlights the deployments of the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard since 9-11-2001. While the Army National Guard deploys Soldiers as part of a unit (company, battalion, or brigade) the Air National Guard sends out Airmen as either individual backfills or in small groups. Air National Guard members have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Japan, Qatar and many other countries.

The 40th Military Police Company mobilized this month to Fort Dix, N.J. to train up for a one year deployment to Iraq. Good luck to them and a safe return.

On this Memorial Day take the time to remember those that have served before and those that continue to serve this country proudly.

SUBMISSIONS

Articles:

- ★ 250 – 300 words for half a page, 600-800 words for full page article.
- ★ Include first and last names, and *verify spelling*
- ★ If there is a Public Affairs officer assigned to your unit ensure he/she reviews it.

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible, minimum 300 dpi
- ★ Credits (who took photograph)
- ★ Cutline (what action is taking place in the photograph and identify individuals in photograph)

Email story submissions by the
15th of every month to:

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COVER PHOTO BY SGT.1ST CLASS STEPHEN PAYER

Where We Are

THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD AS OF MAY 2008



BIVOUAC PROVIDES READINESS TRAINING FOR CES TROOPS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. JULIE AVEY

Imagine being the first person, or among the first group of people, to arrive in a battle zone or disaster area and your responsibility is to prepare for follow on forces to arrive.

For the men and women of the 163rd Civil Engineer Squadron the scenario previously described is a reality they face at a moment's notice, and for that reason constant training and preparation is a way of life. In fact, the squadron recently conducted a bivouac to gauge their effectiveness in such situations.

The dictionary defines the word bivouac as a military encampment made with tents or improvised shelters, usually without shelter from enemy fire. Once at the selected site, troops temporarily provide the basic requirements needed for survival until additional forces and equipment can arrive to provide the requirements on a sustainable basis. Although temporary, ranging from several hours to just a few days, the mission that takes place at the camp site is complex and is a necessity for the survival of those setting up the camp and the forces that follow. Airmen from the 163rd CES took part in a Bivouac over the April drill weekend as part of their annual training, which is also an Air Force requirement.

According to Master Sgt. John Nortz, deployment scheduler for the squadron's Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force (Prime BEEF) component, the exercises are an important part of the squadron's mission.

"The squadron has to train like we deploy, and that is the main reason behind holding an exercise such as the Bivouac," Sgt. Nortz said.

But gearing up for deployment does not always mean going overseas. Although the unit has supported combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom and has even deployed to overseas locations such as Turkey, for Air National Guard units, deploying can also mean loading up your gear and moving a few miles down the road from home to support a local emergency.

In fact, the last two deployments for the 163rd CES took place in the U.S., one of which only about 100 miles away. In 2005, the squadron was tasked with providing support to the greater New Orleans area during Hurricane Katrina disaster relief operations, and in late 2007, the unit deployed to the San Diego area to support efforts to suppress the California wildfires.

"The public does not always recognize how much of a first responder the military civil engineering group is until the disaster plan is in full swing during a real-world event and people see us out there," Sgt. Nortz said. "The public is always appreciative of what we do when we're out there supporting real-world operations, so the training really makes a difference to the nation when put it into action."

Many for the civil engineering occupations that are called to do the mission include carpenters, electricians, air conditioning and heating

(HVAC) technicians and heavy equipment operators.

According to Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Myers, 163rd CES, the unit trains to support all types of missions because a big part of the squadron's responsibility is to be ready for any disaster.

"The Bivouac exercise is a chance for Airmen to practice their skills in a learning environment in order to be ready for the real-world call," Chief Myers said. "We don't always know who, or what rank, will be tasked to deploy, so training scenarios help mentor and put supervisors and subordinates in different roles that they may be asked to fulfill under real-world circumstances. It also provides an opportunity to see the process and see where we stand individually and as a squadron."

"No matter what job you have you need to learn basic war time tasking skills, and this helped me grow in that area," said Senior Airman Marissa Lopez, a 163rd CES material manager, who augmented the security forces team for the exercise. "This exercise gave me a good perspective on issues that I would have otherwise not thought of and helped me to prepare for the increased stress level that may occur. I may be called upon to fill different roles and positions during real-world events, and now I'll better prepare."



Civil Engineers set up tents during a readiness exercise, which took place April 3-6 at the March ARB Regional Training Site.



Senior Airman Zachary Gray places a stake used to secure a decontamination tent.





40TH MILITARY POLICE

"SMOKING GUNS" PREPARE TO DEPLOY TO IRAQ

Family members, friends and distinguished military members gathered April 6 at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, Calif. to say goodbye to the 40th Military Police "Smoking Guns".

The 175-member team of Soldiers is conducting its final phase of deployment training for eight weeks in Fort Dix, N.J., before departing to Iraq to perform their mission of support and self-sustainment training to the Iraqi people.

"Every single one of you is going to make a difference in Iraq, from this private all the way to the company commander," said 40th Infantry Division Commander Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel. "The Iraqi people are ready and want to fight their own battles, they just have to be taught how to win." The 49th Military Police Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Peter B. Cross, offered valuable advice to the soldiers from his previous deployment to Iraq. "As you embark on this mission, I implore you to be kind to one another for the duration of the mobilization. Your fellow Soldier is all you have the next 12 months. Treat this relationship with your fellow Soldiers as a precious gift. This, I assure you, will get you through the difficult times," said Lt. Col. Cross.

"To the family and friends of our deploying troops, I would like to thank you all for your personal sacrifice that you are making in support of your soldier's decision to honor their commitment to their unit, the Army, and their country," said Col. Donald Currier, 49th MP Brigade Commander. "I would like to encourage all of you family members to support one another throughout this deployment. People will tell you that they understand how you feel, but no can empathize with you the way our fellow families can," said Col. Currier.

Brigadier General Keith D. Jones, 40th ID Deputy Commander, politely hastened his introduction to the lectern and said, "This day is not about me. It's about these fine Soldiers. I understand what your mission is, and know where you are going to go. It's going to be a challenge, it's going to be more than a handful, but I also know that you are up to that challenge. I want to thank you for being in uniform at a time when your country needs your



PHOTO BY SGT. KEN BINCE

service, and for having the courage to put yourself in harms way for the freedom of others."

Immediately preceding the ceremony, the families and friends of the "Smoking Guns" enjoyed a barbecue lunch with their soon departing Soldiers. Some of the soldiers had dozens of relatives while others had only their fellow MPs. For most, it was the last opportunity before leaving to take a snapshot, cradle a child, or embrace a spouse, and understand what was really important in life to one's self.



BEALE GAINS NEW INTEL

GLOBAL HAWK ASSETS

STORY AND PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN GEORGE CLOUTIER

BEALE AIR FORCE BASE Calif. -- Team Beale's high altitude intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission gained three new California Air National Guard units in a ceremony at the Community Center on April 1.

The ceremony officiated the re-designation of the 222nd Intelligence Support Squadron and the stand-up of the 222nd Operational Support Squadron and 222nd Communications Maintenance Flight.

Present at the ceremony were Maj. Gen. Dennis Lucas, California Air National Guard commander, Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, California National Guard assistant adjutant general, Brig. Gen. H. D. Pumbo Jr., 9th Reconnaissance Wing commander, Col. Albert Reif, 940th Air Refueling Wing commander and Col. Steven Beck, 162nd Combat Communications Group commander.

During the ceremony, General Lucas addressed the assembly, commenting on how the move of the 222nd to Beale is part of a larger plan of California Air National Guard integrating with active-duty Air Force and moving away from older missions.

"This is a culmination of over five years of work," said General Lucas. "The initiative for the 222nd that we're celebrating today started in September of 2002 as part of our Total Force integration plan. Our goal



Col. Steven Beck, 162nd Combat Communications Group commander, retires the guidon of the 222nd Combat Communications Squadron.

was to re-roll existing manpower forces in the California Air National Guard from legacy missions into more relevant missions that the Air Force needs today."

Chief Master Sgt. Eric Rivera, 222nd ISS superintendent, said the 222nd ISS and 222nd OSS will work primarily with the 548th Intelligence Group, while the 222nd Communications Maintenance Flight will work with the 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 12 Aircraft Maintenance Unit.

According to Maj. Kerry Adams, 222nd ISS director of operations, the majority of 222nd ISS Airmen are in communications career fields, while the 222nd OSS Airmen are primarily intelligence fields and the 222nd Communications Maintenance Flight Airmen are radio maintenance.

Chief Rivera said the new mission is positive for both the guard and active duty.

"It's yet another good change for the California Air Guard because

we're going to gain another relevant mission," Chief Rivera said. "We're bringing skill sets that we already have into another weapons system."

"When we were combat comm., that mission was built around mostly training to support the warfighter in a tactical environment, should the need arise," the Maj. Adams said. "Only on rare occasions were we doing something actively. Here, we're doing it every day. We're working alongside active duty with [on-the-job training] taking place in real time on real missions."

Echoing General Lucas's earlier comments, the chief said he is looking forward to working on the growing Global Hawk mission.

"Global Hawk is a growing mission in the Air Force, and we are excited to be here taking part in it as it continues to develop and unfold," the chief said.

"We're sharing another accomplishment between ourselves, the California National Guard and Team Beale," said General Kight. "As demonstrated here today, the California National Guard continues to expand its capability. We have a solid relationship here with Team Beale. We anticipate these reactivations will provide huge dividends for the Air Force, the National Guard and the state of California."

CITIZEN SOLDIER

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT. TONYA FORBES

On the afternoon of April 5, a company of 40th Aviation Brigade Soldiers gathered to participate in the naturalization ceremony of one of their own in a hangar at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. Sgt. Juan David Martinez of Echo Company, 1-140th Aviation Battalion (Air Assault) 40th Aviation Brigade, officially became a U.S. citizen in a ceremony officiated by Federal Judge Harry Pregerson. Martinez, who was born in Mexico, has been a member of the California Army National Guard for five years, including a tour of duty in Iraq.

"It's an honor to be a US citizen, to be a part of this country, and for me and my family to have a chance for freedom," said Martinez. "This is a new beginning to many things. My U.S. citizenship will open up many opportunities and job possibilities." Martinez added that it took several months, and his chain-of-command supported him at many points.

Before presiding over the swearing-in ceremony. Judge Pregerson, who serves on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, told the assembled soldiers, "We would not have a free country if not for citizen-soldiers and it's been that way through history."

Pregerson described his World War II service in the Marine Corps, during which he was severely wounded at the battle of Okinawa. "I was rescued by two guys from El Paso. They risked their own lives to save me. The guys, who happened to be cousins, their last name was Martinez and that's why I'm happy to be here today."

After the ceremony, 1-140th Commander Lt. Col. Mark A. Van Dyke presented Pregerson with a California Commendation Medal, saying "The National Guard really appreciates your contribution" as he pinned the award on the black judicial robe. Martinez, now a U.S. citizen, plans to re-enlist for six more years in Novem-



Sgt. Juan David Martinez stands proudly with his mother and father following his citizenship ceremony held at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, Ca.

FIELD ARTILLERY SOLDIERS

BUILD HOPE IN ASSRIYA

BY SPC. ANDREA MERRITT



PHOTO BY SPC. ANDREA MERRITT

Off the wall

Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, place concertina wire around the wall of a girls' school in Assriya, Iraq, a village located outside of Camp Taji. Since February, the Soldiers have delivered school supplies and made some repairs to the schools in the village. The unit is due to return home in April and the Soldiers, who conduct convoy security missions at night, are proud of the work they have done in the village. "I actually volunteered for this mission because I wanted to do something more to help out ... I'm glad I did this because there's a lot of positive things and a lot of good memories I'm getting out of this too," said Staff Sgt. Richard Martinez, a squad leader in the platoon, who is also a principal in his civilian career.



PHOTO BY SPC. ANDREA MERRITT

Young villagers

A few Iraqi children from the Assriya village in Iraq gather around Lt. Col. Lee Ellis, commander of the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, during his visit to the village March 30. He came along with Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st SB, to view the work that the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, had done at schools in the area. "I am very proud of everything they are doing," said Ellis. "Seeing the added security improvements was particularly rewarding. Although it may seem small in the scheme of things, I think the Iraqis understand that we want to help develop a secure environment and promote conditions for growth."



PHOTO BY 2ND PLATOON, BATTERY A.

ASSRIYA, Iraq — The Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, spend most of their nights conducting convoy security missions.

Although they have a job that requires them to be nocturnal, a few of the Soldiers have chosen to use their daylight hours to work in a village located outside of Camp Taji.

Since February, Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA, use their personal time between missions to deliver supplies and make repairs to schools in the village of Assriya, Iraq.

"When we first started, we started with volunteers, but everybody volunteered so it ended up 100 percent participation," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Weaver, a Greenville, Calif., native and the platoon leader for 2nd Plt., Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA.

"It's a good cultural awakening for these guys. It gives them a side of Iraq that they normally don't get to see and a chance to interact with the Iraqi people," said Weaver.

Weaver, who is a teacher in the civilian world, organized a drive at his school back in California to collect school supplies after he saw the need Iraqi schools had for basic materials during a previous deployment to Iraq in 2005.

After he was given clearance to go into Assriya, the platoon distributed the initial packages, which were filled with notebook paper, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, chalk and staplers.

"When we first came in, they only had one stapler for the whole school, and keep in mind there are about 450 students. There were no computers, no copiers," Weaver explained.

"I have a \$1 million budget to run my school back home and here they only had one stapler. It's an extreme situation over here," said Staff Sgt. Richard Martinez, a squad leader in the platoon and a gun truck commander for the unit, who is also a principal at Washington School in Cloverdale Unified School District in California.

Once the supplies were delivered, the platoon asked if there was anything

else they could assist with. The platoon has also placed concertina wire around the wall of the girls' school and worked on repairing a leaky roof.

Working on the school house in Assriya has been hard work for the Soldiers, but it is a task that many of them find rewarding, especially because of the children in the village.

"I'm just real glad to be on this. I don't get to go on a lot of missions as an armorer, but this definitely would have been the one I chose if I had my choice of missions," said Sgt. Brent Courtney, a Hesperia, Calif., native and armorer for Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA.

"The kids make my day when I go out there. As bad as things are, they still have a good attitude about everything," added Courtney, who was asked to get involved with the project because of his background as a general contractor.

The platoon is mostly made up of combat engineers, so doing the work at the schools was not a problem. Courtney did much of the construction around the unit's area of operations and was asked to run the work crew for the mission at the school.

The children bonded with the 2nd Platoon Soldiers and even tried to help them with some of the projects as they worked. The village sheikh, Sheikh Luqman Raheem, is very grateful for the work that has been done in his area.

"Thank you so much for what you do. You have done more for my village than anyone else has done," said Sheikh Luqman.

The unit is scheduled to return home in April and the work they have done will leave a lasting impression on the villagers in Assriya as well as the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon.

"It's been an eye opener. It's a totally different experience that nobody could ever understand unless they came here and were a part of it themselves," said Spc. Shane Miniger, a Hughson, Calif., native and a gun truck driver for 2nd Plt., Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA.

"Maybe they will have a little bit of a different opinion about troops in this country and know that we're here to help out and affect them in some positive ways," Miniger added.

Through the wire

Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, unload concertina wire to place around the wall of a girls' school in Assriya, Iraq. "When we first started, we started with volunteers, but everybody volunteered so it ended up 100 percent participation," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Weaver, a Greenville, Calif., native and the platoon leader. "It's a good cultural awakening for these guys. It gives them a side of Iraq that they normally don't get to see and a chance to interact with the Iraqi people."

COSMIC 2x4

MAJ. STEVEN KEIHL, DIRECTOR OF MENTAL HEALTH



I attend the Spiritual Life Center in Sacramento and greatly enjoy being a part of the congregation. This past week I had the honor of meeting for about 90 minutes with the senior minister, Michael Moran. We spent much of our time together talking about war and significant life shaping events in our lives. I reflected on the reality that for too many people (including myself), life has to toss out some really difficult circumstances for people to make real changes in their lives. Michael refers to these major moments in life as a “cosmic 2x4”. I had to laugh at this description but really like it at the same time.

What is the cosmic 2x4? It is that moment in time when the whole universe seems to fall on it's ear. It is that point in our life when all of our best efforts, all of our plans, all of our abilities seem pointless in the face of some overwhelming obstacle or situation. These moments can be very, very difficult but they are also full of potential for significant and positive change. Have you ever been there? Have you

ever been smacked aside the head with the cosmic 2x4?

Reflecting on my life, there have been many moments of deep challenge. There was the loss of my mother from cancer a little more than ten years ago. There were moments of career instability and career crossroads. In my life, there have been a number of critical moments when the challenges of the world seemed to engulf me, surround me, completely get my attention. At times I responded to the challenge well and learned some great lessons. At other times I responded to the challenge poorly and learned some very painful lessons.

Personally speaking, the most significant “cosmic 2x4” moment in my life took place in the sand of Iraq. I would guess that many who wear the uniform would echo similar sentiments. I was trying to run a company of Military Police, deal with a collapsing marriage, work through some of the experiences of war, and address some significant life questions and doubts. My

struggle led me down a dangerous path of depression that included a bout with suicidal thought. And yet in the pit of the lowest moment in my life, there was opportunity! Does that sound strange to you? It might, but it is still true. In our darkest and most desperate moments of life, opportunity exists.

In my case, there was the opportunity to learn from my own mistakes, to learn from the circumstances beyond my control and the ugly realities of war. There was an opportunity to reflect upon my own priorities, my own commitments, my own life choices. I must admit that I have made a lot of poor choices in my life, but during my “cosmic 2x4” moment, I experienced a sense of clarity like never before and took the necessary steps to make changes in my life. The journey has not always been easy but I committed myself to becoming a new person... to learning to be honest, real, and vulnerable with others. I committed myself to appreciate the moment, to enjoy life, to treat each day as if it were my last. These choices and

changes have led to new and significant relationships in my world, an abiding peace, and many more blessings than I can count.

OK, so what is the point? Simple, don't waste the “cosmic 2x4”. I am certain that some reading this article are dealing with some significant struggles, some seemingly overwhelmingly difficult circumstances, some troubles, problems, etc. There are probably even a few dealing with a tragedy, a loss, something really painful and penetrating. Life can be difficult and life can hurt. But don't forget, in the midst of the pain, in the middle of the struggle, there is opportunity. Somewhere in your “cosmic 2x4” there is an opportunity for you to take a good look at your life, your world, your relationships and to commit yourself to making positive changes. Opportunity knocks, sometimes it knocks hard (like a cosmic 2x4) don't waste the opportunities!

Mental Health Update

I had the honor of both attending and presenting at the American Counseling Association (ACA) Annual Conference and Exposition in March. It was a fantastic event with nearly 3000 counseling professionals in attendance. The ACA President, Brian Canfield, communicated a concern and a focus on military mental health for this year's conference. Out of more than 400 educational sessions, he hand selected 10 as Presidential Featured Sessions. I am honored that one of my two sessions was selected. In fact, 2 of the 10 Presidential Featured Sessions directly addressed military mental health issues. By my count there were 10 specific programs directly addressing military mental health issues. This is a huge step forward. The better our mental health professionals can understand the military culture and the specific challenges our service members and their families face, the better they can care for and assist.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Congrats to Capt. James Joppy! Capt. Joppy is the first official AGR appointed mental health officer assigned in response to the DOD Mental Health Action Plan. Capt. Joppy will serve as the Director of Psychological Health for the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Featured Mental Health Resource:

This month's featured resource is the book *Combat Stress Injury Theory, Research, and Management* by C.R. Figley and W.P. Nash. The book is published by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group and can be found on Amazon.com. The book deals with the psychological effects of combat exposure and represents a definitive collection of the most current ideas and practices in the area of combat operational stress management. Check it out!

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TWO DOWN, FIVE TO GO CALIFORNIA GUARDSMAN CLIMBS WESTERN HEMISPHERE'S HIGHEST PEAK

BY SGT. WILL MARTIN



The view from the top of Argentina's Mount Aconcagua is compelling. Each year, the peak lures about 3,500 climbers to snake up its arduous trails, all in an effort to gaze down from the Western Hemisphere's highest point.

But by the time California Army Guardsman Maj. Kevin McMahan had reached the mountaintop – a 22,841-foot summit requiring a 10-day climb – the view had lost most of its charm. Only one desire remained: Getting back down.

"It was just a huge relief," McMahan said of reaching the top of Aconcagua on Feb. 13. "A storm was coming in, and quite a few people had weathered off the mountain. I just had a desire to just get down and finish."

The climb was the second of what McMahan hopes will be seven, the celebrated number among avid mountaineers. The seven continents offer climbers like McMahan an irresistible challenge: summing their seven highest peaks.

"It's the same thing that would drive an endurance athlete to do an ultramarathon," said McMahan, who works full-time at the 40th Infantry Division's headquarters in Los Alamitos. "It's just the challenge."

Having topped Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro in February 2006, McMahan joined his brother and their seven-man team in late January and headed for South America.

"The greatest challenge is the altitude," said McMahan. "You could be the world's greatest athlete but you don't know how the altitude's going to affect you."

As the second tallest of the seven summits, Aconcagua is quick to bring on altitude sickness, turning back about three quarters of those attempting to reach the peak.

"There's really not much you can do to train for the altitude," said McMahan, noting there are no

comparably tall peaks in California. "You can climb Mount Whitney and things like that, but besides that ... I do normal PT, when I can at lunch, and on the weekends I like to get out and hike."

McMahan said Aconcagua's cold was another obstacle for which he had trouble preparing. Sub-zero winds greeted his team each morning as they began their hikes as early as 3 a.m.

"Being from Southern California, it's just tough to deal (with the cold)," said McMahan, an Ocean-side resident. "Frostbite is always a concern. If you just take off your gloves for any prolonged period of time (you were at risk)."

Aside from a strong constitution, Mountaineering requires extensive planning, added McMahan. Travel, equipment and logistic demands were intense for the infantry officer and his team, which relied on three guides and plenty of expensive equipment.

"It's similar to a very challenging field exercise," said McMahan, whose team slept in tent cities, bundled in cold-weather gear sure to make any mountain grunt jealous. "Sometimes it's miserable, but when it's over with, you're satisfied with what you've accomplished."

McMahan said Alaska's Mount McKinley might be the next stop for his crew, but another team's mission will come first. He will deploy with the 40th ID to Kosovo next year, putting his mountaineering aspirations on hold.

"I'm in the Guard," McMahan stated plainly when asked about his service, adding that while he doesn't know how he'll train while deployed, he still has an eye toward future climbs.

"I'm looking forward to doing the four other peaks," said McMahan. "But I don't know about Everest."



PHOTOS BY MAJ. KEVIN MCMAHAN



DEPLOYMENTS

CONUS

ARMY (4804)

AIR (3426)

UNITED STATES

GTMO

ARMY (468)

EGYPT

ARMY (443)

ALL OCONUS

AIR (6856)

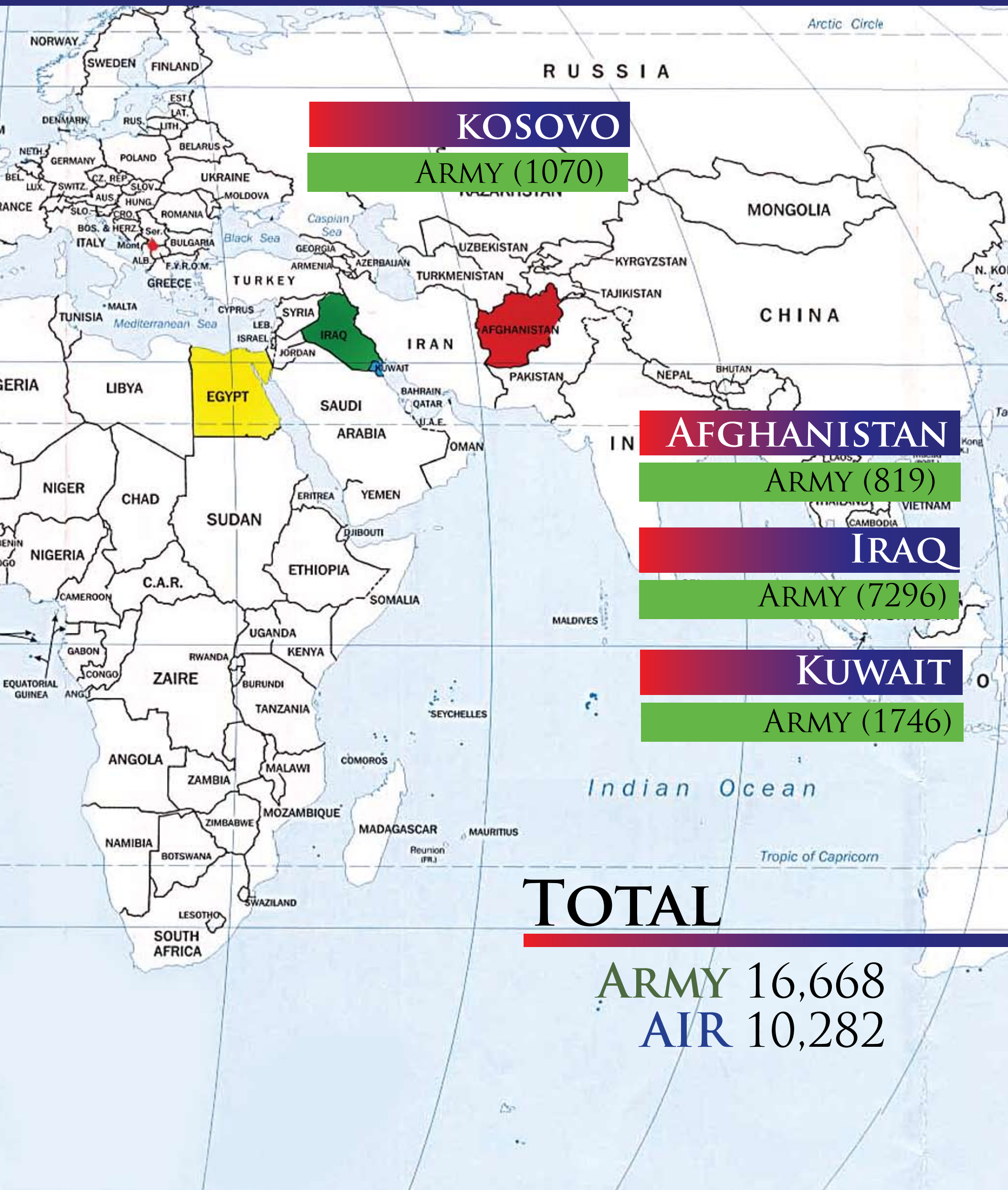
FROM THE EDITOR

The at-a-glance section this month highlights the deployments of the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard since 9-11-2001. While the Army National Guard deploys Soldiers as part of a unit (company, battalion, or brigade) the Air National Guard sends out Airmen as either individual backfills or in small groups. Air National Guard members have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Japan, Qatar and many other countries.

CONUS = Continental United States

OCONUS= Outside Continental United States

TO DATE SINCE 9/11



COMMISSARY.COM SAVE MONEY!!!

Great Savings, Coupons, Recipes, Health and Food Safety at Commissary.com

Take advantage of your local commissary. Now National Guard members have unlimited access to great savings at the commissary. Prices at the commissary are at cost plus a 5% surcharge which equals rock bottom prices. Compare and save!

History of U. S. Military Commissaries

American military commissaries sell groceries and household goods to active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and retired service families at an average savings of more than 30 percent when compared to prices at local civilian supermarkets.

The commissary benefit is not a recent innovation. Sales of goods from commissary department storehouses to military personnel began in 1825, when Army officers at specified posts could make purchases for their personal use, paying at-cost prices. By 1841, officers could also purchase items for members of their immediate families.

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) was established May 15, 1990, by a memorandum from the deputy secretary of defense. This was the first DoD functional agency consolidation during the post-Cold War cutbacks and downsizing.

Commissaries today

Commissaries still sell products at cost as they have since 1825. Today's customers also pay a 5-percent surcharge, mandated by Congress. The surcharge pays for new stores, as well as renovations of existing facilities.

Commissary patrons save an average of more than 30 percent on their grocery bills. That level of savings, verified by the agency's Price Comparison Study, amounts to more than \$2,700 per year for a family of four that regularly shops in a commissary. Customers receive substantial additional savings through special sales and coupons.

Guard/Reserve On-site Sales

Through the new "Bringing the Benefit to You" campaign, DeCa are reaching out to our Guard and Reserve members who have earned the commissary benefit, but who cannot easily travel to a local store to shop on a regular basis. "Bringing the Benefit to You" includes taking a bit of the commissary itself to Guard and Reserve units through on-site truckload case-lot sales.

In addition to supporting Guard and Reserve members, these sales are open to all authorized commissary customers. Sale dates and locations are listed below.

May

Los Angeles Air Force Base - Store Phone: 310-414-9001 X399

June

Los Angeles Air Force Base - Store Phone: 310-414-9001 X399
Port Hueneme - Store Phone: (805)982-2400

July

Lemoore Naval Air Station - Store Phone: (559) 998-4669/(559) 998-4827

August

Vandenberg Air Force Base - Store Phone: 805-734-3354 EXT. 254



www.commissaries.com

- Case Lot Sales
- Coupons
- Virtual Shopping
- Latest Commissary News
- DeCA Dietitian
- Kay's Kitchen
- Store Locations and Hours
- Your Action Line
- Nutrition Tips



Discover Your Benefit

SOLDIERS SAVE LIVES

STORY BY: 2ND LT. HARRISON BITTENBENDER



The Det 1, HHB, 1-143rd FA medical aid and security team, from left to right: Staff Sgt. Abundio Medina, Cpl. Anthony Malasavanh (in ASV turret), Spc. Christopher Belmontez and Sgt. Sherman Kee all contributed to the medical treatment and evacuation of their Iraqi comrade-in-arms on the night of the incident. Photo by 2Lt. Harrison Bittenbender, Det 1, HHB, 1-143rd FA.

Camp Taji Iraq. Regardless of the fact that 75% of Detachment 1 Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, California Army National Guard Soldiers are certified as Combat Life Savers, no Soldier wants to be put in the situation where they need to utilize the skills they have learned. Due to the proactive tower sentries Det 1, HHB has along Main Supply Route Tampa, most of the Soldiers in Det 1 have been spared the reality of seeing a fellow Soldier wounded in combat. But after observing the actions of Spc. Christopher Belmontez on February 24, 2008, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that these Soldiers are up to any challenge that presents itself.

Having manned the gunner's position in the ASV (Armored Security Vehicle) numerous times, Spc. Bel-

montez has witnessed thousands of vehicles and convoys enter Camp Taji throughout the deployment. Blocking the entrance lane to Castle Gate, the ASV is the first position manned by US Soldiers, and therefore frequently in contact with outside elements. For the wounded Iraqi Army (IA) soldier, the ASV was not seen as defensive or offensive position, but rather a saving grace and his first chance at receiving medical attention.

When the two Iraqi Army HMMWVs first approached the entrance to Castle Gate that night, they told were told to turn around and head to Gunner's Gate, since they were not escorted by any U.S. Military personnel. As standard operating procedure dictates, only U.S. Military convoys can enter Castle Gate, all others should be re-

directed to Gunner or South Gate. However, these IA Soldiers seemed more persistent than usual, and would not turn around. Realizing that something was wrong, Staff Sgt. Abundio Medina, the midnight shift NCOIC, came down to assess the situation. Upon Staff Sgt. Medina's arrival to the ASV, Spc. Belmontez had already discovered the cause of the IA Soldiers' persistence, and was waiting for additional support to arrive. He learned that an IA Soldier had been wounded in the area while standing guard outside his vehicle waiting for the rest of his convoy to reorganize themselves. The IA convoy was north of Camp Taji on MSR Tampa when a civilian vehicle drove by the stationary convoy and shot at its occupants. The unlucky IA Soldier was shot twice in his left calf, and was in too much pain to return fire as he fell to the

ground. His comrades put him in the back of the HMMWV, covered him with a blanket, but rendered no first aid to him as they waited for the rest of the convoy to begin moving.

By the time the Soldier had arrived at Castle Gate, he had lost a substantial amount of blood and still had not received any type of first aid. With ASV providing overwatch with the M2 .50-caliber machine gun, and Staff Sgt. Medina providing additional security, Spc. Belmontez reacted as the first responder to the injured Soldier. After a quick assessment of the two gunshot wounds, Spc. Belmontez grabbed his CLS bag and began rendering first aid. Since he did not locate any other more life threatening wounds, Spc. Belmontez used a bandage to cover both the entrance and exit wounds on the IA Soldier's calf. After dressing the wound and elevating the Soldier's leg, Spc. Belmontez advised the other IA Soldiers in the vehicle that they could wet the wounded Soldier's lips, but not give him water for fear that he might go into shock.

On the night of the incident, Spc. Belmontez distinguished himself from the other CLS certified Soldiers by treating a Soldier wounded in combat. But more importantly, Spc. Belmontez's quick response to render first aid to a wounded Soldier, regardless of the uniform he was wearing, exemplified the soldier's creed, "Mission first, People Always." Spc. Belmontez did not see an Iraqi, but a Soldier in need, and his lack of hesitation will never be forgotten by any of the U.S. and Iraqi Army Soldiers that witnessed his actions that evening.

MUCH NEEDED CLEAN UP

STORY AND PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. BRYANT MAUDE



An Iraqi Republic Railways worker and Staff Sgt. Gilbert Torress, a native of Fresno, Calif and the sergeant of the guard with Detachment 1, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, inspect a train car that sits several feet off the tracks at Camp Taji's trail yard. The tracks fell into disrepair following the outbreak of the war. These tracks are currently being renovated as part of an initiative to rebuild the railroad and it's capabilities to move large volumes of cargo.

CAMP TAJI – It has been four years since a train powered its way onto Camp Taji, Iraq, and at least that long since any care or attention has been paid to the rail yard. As a result, a crew of ten Iraqi Republic Railway's workers started the rigorous task of cleaning and repairing the neglected tracks.

"Today they are repairing switches, placing derailed train cars back onto the tracks, and clearing debris," said Staff Sgt. Gilbert Torress, a native of Fresno, Calif., and the sergeant of the guard with Detachment 1, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade. "After this they will load containers on cars and test the tracks."

These tracks are currently being renovated as part of an initiative to rebuild the railroad and it's capabilities to move large volumes of cargo.

"The trains pulling in here will carry mostly containers and Iraqi Army materials bound for the maintenance facilities under the Taji National Depot," said Maj. Ira Baldwin, a Laurinburg, N.C., native and mobility chief for the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

Every track cleaned and switch repaired is a step closer to a fully functioning railroad and the eventual creation of good paying jobs for Iraqi people.

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS ON PATROL IN FALAHAT

BY 1ST LT. DILLON FIKE



Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Morel, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, makes friends with a young Iraqi child during a patrol in Falahat, Iraq.

FALAHAT, Iraq – Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California Army National Guard unit assigned to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, started their day early with an operations planning meeting in the company area of Team Jedi, the Military Transition Team for 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division.

Their mission was to join their Iraqi Army counterparts and convoy to the local town of Falahat, Iraq, just a few kilometers south of Camp Taji, to meet with local leaders and patrol the area.

The planning and rehearsals took several hours and had all the Soldiers involved in attendance. Pre-

combat checks and inspections were also conducted. Once the preparations for the mission were complete, the engines of the up-armored humvees roared to life and the Soldiers were off on the mission.

Proceeding outside the wire in tactical formation, the MiTT, 1st Bn., 143 FA Soldiers, and the Iraqi Army Soldiers headed south toward Falahat.

Their first stop was on the outskirts of the town to visit a local sheik at his home. Upon arrival, the Coalition Forces set up a perimeter and secured the area. Once this task was completed, they met with the sheik and several local Iraqis. Although only parts of the vil-

lage had electricity, with no sewage or trash collection services, the people were friendly and seemed appreciative. Curious children approached the troops, making friendly gestures and playing games while the meetings took place.

The Soldiers proceeded to get a sense of the local area and probed about rumors of possible weapons trafficking in the area, which later turned out to be questionable.

There were concerns addressed by the sheik about U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters releasing their countermeasure flares too close to the village. The MiTT informed him that they would see what they could do to resolve this matter.

The patrol moved only a short distance before they stopped at another sheik's home, where a meeting between several other local sheiks, an Iraqi Army brigade commander and Coalition troops took place.

The purpose of this meeting was to establish a new local governing system, and to set a time schedule of when the local sheiks could meet and discuss civil and tribal issues. They had several discussions about various issues of concern.

They scheduled the next meeting to be held at the Iraqi Army colonel's office, and worked towards a solid, ongoing schedule to continue to address local issues.

These types of combined missions with the Iraqi Army and meetings with local leaders support the Multi National Division- Baghdad commander's priorities, including protecting the population and pro-

moting sustainable security with Iraqi Security Forces in the lead.

These particular meetings are a significant gain for the area, because the local leaders are beginning to come together to govern themselves and enhance efforts for stability. It is also critical for the Coalition Soldiers to understand the issues that are affecting the lives of the members of the communities surrounding Taji.

The Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Battery B 1st Bn., 143rd FA, did a great job assisting the MiTT Team, the Iraqi Army, and in representing the battalion's Soldiers in a positive manner to local Iraqis.

Due to their demonstrated professionalism, they were invited to support future missions. Coincidentally, as 1st Platoon's primary mission is to control a critical Entry Control Point on Camp Taji, they interact daily with MiTT teams and the Iraqi Army on Camp Taji.

This experience makes them an ideal choice to augment the MiTT team missions. What better opportunity could there be for the 1st Bn., 143rd FA, Soldiers to get a feel for the local communities surrounding Camp Taji. Winning the confidence of the local populace and helping the Iraqi Army is a crucial ingredient in the counter-insurgency effort, and in bringing the troops home.

The Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 143rd FA, will be going home soon, and the battalion's Soldier's are honored to have done their part.



1st Lt. Dillon Fike, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, reconns the Tigris River with his Iraqi counterpart, while on a mission in Falahat, Iraq.

PHOTO BY: MAJ. MICHAEL WISE

REGIONAL TRAINING SITE-MAINTENANCE

BY CAPT. EARL D. RUSSELL AND SGT. 1ST CLASS JOHN T. DAVIS

The construction of the Regional Training Site-Maintenance (RTS-M) main building was completed in July 1989 providing over 24,000 square feet of training area. This original complex consisted of 2 classrooms, a technical library, administration and supply areas, a training device area, an engine test cell, and 10 fully equipped maintenance bays with a 25 Ton overhead crane. The following buildings completed the campus: 6108 and 6109 for billeting and 6124 as a dayroom.

The evolution of the campus includes the addition of building 6427 that consists of 4 state of the art classrooms incorporating technological advances including high speed internet, electronic whiteboards, and overhead projection platforms. Having building 6427 has allowed us to expand our student capacity, gives staff and students the ability to access the most up to date publications and materials during class and can be used as an after class study hall in the evenings and on weekends. Building 6004 is almost complete and will give the school access to individual billets for our NCOES students. Building 6004 will be a shared facility between post and the RTS-M with the RTS-M having priority of use.

The RTS-M's original higher headquarters was the Director, Training Organization, California Army National Guard but changed in March 2000 to Headquarters, 223rd Infantry Regiment. In January 2001 the Unit Designation was changed to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 223rd Infantry Regiment and we are currently designated as Company D, 223rd Regiment (Combat Arms).

The RTS-M's original charter was to provide Sustainment and Transition training on current and new equipment. The current mission has evolved to include Military Occupational Specialty-Training (MOS-T), Additional Skill Identifier (ASI), Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) training for the Army National Guard (ARNG), the United States Army Reserve (USAR) and the Active Component.

In addition, the RTS-M supports the California Army Nation Guard by conducting USAEUR Drivers Training, facilitating New Equipment Fielding, providing additional maintenance training to deploying units and any other training task assigned by the Adjutant General.

In 1998 a study, conducted by Headquarters Department of the Army, showed that while 70 percent of the Total Force maintenance capability was in the Reserve Components (ARNG and USAR), these soldiers were not maintaining proficiency in their MOS because they rarely saw the new equipment coming into the force. With the fiscal constraints of the time there was a mix of old and new equipment on the battlefield and we had to rely on the RC ability to "Fix the Mix".

Nationally the RTS-M's train 60% of all ordnance soldiers and collectively they train every automotive MOS trained by the active component.



Training Available at RTS-M

63CMF	Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC)
52D10	Power Generation Equipment Repairer
52D30	Power Generation Equipment Repairer Basic Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC)
63B10	Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic
63B30	Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic BNCOC
63H10	Tracked Vehicle Mechanic
63H30	Tracked Vehicle Mechanic BNCOC
63M10	M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle Systems Mechanic
63M30	M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle Systems Mechanic BNCOC
ASI H8	Track Vehicle Recovery Specialist for MOS's 63A/D/H/M
ASI H8	Wheel Vehicle Recovery Specialist for MOS 63B

The RTS-M conducts back to back and overlapping courses throughout the year with TRADOC developed and approved Programs of Instruction scheduling in excess of 700 students annually. Our Instructors are trained and certified by the Proponent School and the RTS-M is evaluated to maintain accreditation every three years by the Quality Assurance Directorate at CASCOM, Fort Lee Virginia.



MAINTENANCE GROUP MEMBERS

RETURN FROM AFGHANISTAN

BY SENIOR AIRMAN DUQUETTE



Left to right, Staff Sgt. Skyler Swinhart, Senior Airman Eric Hurley and Staff Sgt. Michael Astolfo were all recognized for their accomplishments during a four-month deployment to Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan.

Three Wing members from the 163d Maintenance Group returned recently from a four-month tour at Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan, where they supported 'round-the-clock MQ-1 Predator operations overseas.

For all three members, Staff Sgts Michael Astolfo, Skyler Swinhart, Predator crew chiefs, and Senior Airman Eric Hurley, a Predator avionics technician, this was their first deployment with the Predator. The team replaced two other Wing members, Master Sgt. Allen

King, a Predator crew chief, and Senior Airman Dustin Cornell, a Predator avionics technician, who returned in December after being the first California Air National Guard maintainers to deploy in support of overseas maintenance operations for the Predator.

While tasked with providing maintenance support to warfighters in the area of operations, the team also had to face the threat of attacks against the base by enemy forces.

"The base was attacked on a regular basis," said Airman Cornell, "The first time we were attacked was a wake up call to me. It made me realize I was in a war zone."

But, despite the hazards, Sergeant Astolfo said there were ways to take your mind off the situation.

"It wasn't all war over there, we had some fun too," said Sgt. Astolfo, "Both myself and Sgt. Skyler won the best mustache award. Sgt. Skyler won it because he had the best, but mine wouldn't grow right, so I won it because it was the most messed up."

During their tour, Sgt. Astolfo and Airman Hurley were both recognized for being the maintainers of the month.

COMPANY B, 223RD MI

HONES SKILLS DURING TRAINING EXERCISE

STORY AND PHOTO BY 1ST LT. AARON SOLANO

If you thought Fort Ord in Seaside, Calif., was closed and all military personnel relocated, you should guess again. Now called the Ord Military Community, it supports the Presidio of Monterey, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and the Naval Post Graduate School, but more importantly the California Army National Guard.

On the evening of April 4, Company B, 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion (Linguists) held their annual Military Intelligence Exercise. This year the emphasis combined Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) training in order to challenge Soldiers on merging the two unique sources of intelligence in real-time without a higher headquarters.

Non-Military Occupational Specialty qualified Soldiers were grouped together with experienced Non-commissioned officers and sent out from Forward Operating Base Harris into Percwyn, Iraq on the Iraq/Iran border, a simulated environment at the Fort Ord Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) site.

Twenty soldiers successfully completed the 30-hour exercise. They wrote more than 40 reports, derived from detainee interrogations, Locally Employed Personnel screenings, liaisons and walk-ins. Role players from the Civil Air Patrol in San Francisco and Arabic students attending DLIFLC added to the complexity of the mission.

Civilian and military role-players provided a taxing environment of

cross-cultural, historical conflicts in a foreign language. By conducting detailed interrogations to extract critical information requirements without frightening the local population, Company B Soldiers helped safeguard civilians and bring stability to the region.

"Soldiers are thoroughly trained to insert themselves into the community," said 1st Lt. William Mansikka, executive officer, Company

B. "By understanding local culture and customs, MI Soldiers are less threatening and regarded with respect and trust."

Company B holds the MIEX each year in the spring and welcomes role-players. Anyone interested in participating in next year's exercise can contact 1st Lt. Alli Frey at alli.p.frey@us.army.mil.



A SOLDIER'S LEGACY

BY SGT. WILL MARTIN

Intro

As bodies fell from 110th story windows and across his TV screen, Daniel Unger awoke from his disbelief.

"I think that brought me out of shock and I realized this was really happening," the 16-year-old Unger wrote of watching the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in a letter to himself the next day. "My thought was, 'We need to declare war on these guys.'"

That same day, President Bush promised that America would "hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts." The words fanned a flame in Daniel, one that had been burning since he learned of his grandfather's service in World War II.

"I'd like to be in the infantry like Grandpa," Daniel would tell his father, Marc, six months later, announcing his desire to join the California Army National Guard. "I want to be a grunt."

A Soldier's sacrifice

The patriotic winds that carried Daniel from his home in Exeter, Calif., to Iraq were brisk. He and the rest of the 1-185th Infantry Battalion deployed in November 2003, only seven weeks after he completed infantry school at Fort Benning, Ga.

On May 25, 2004, Daniel received an order to keep watch over two Iraqi contractors at Forward Operation Base Kalsu. Only a week earlier he had bore down on six Iraqi insurgents with the fury of his M-16, marching all six into captivity. Now, he protected two of their countrymen. But for Daniel, there was no contradiction in his duty; he had enlisted to protect the innocent; their country of origin was immaterial.

Enemy mortars would soon reveal the depths of Daniel's self-

lessness. The ground moved under the weight of two 102mm mortars as they erupted inside the base, stirring other Soldiers to sprint to a nearby bunker. But Daniel, realizing the Iraqi contractors under his watch were cowering in the open, stopped to shepherd them toward the bunker.

"I know what he was made of," said Marc of his son's decision that day. "There was no way he was gonna get in that bunker with those guys in harm's way."

Eyewitnesses tell Marc that his son pushed the Iraqis toward the safety of the bunker, and as a third mortar landed, Daniel fell.

Marc is clear that Daniel didn't lose his life, he gave it away.

In looking for words to capture his son's sacrifice, Marc, a Baptist minister, quotes the Gospel of John: "No greater love has man than this - that he lay down his life for his friends."

A legacy is born

When California National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark drove to Exeter to attend Daniel's funeral on June 4, 2004, he stumbled upon an apparent ghost town. The quaint city of 10,000 residents was barren. Only as he turned the corner toward Daniel's funeral did the situation clear, even as his eyes clouded with tears: More than 2,500 had turned out to honor Daniel's memory. This son of Exeter would not soon be forgotten.



Among those honoring Daniel was then-Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Thomas Eres. Unready to witness the close of Daniel's legacy, he urged Marc to carry on his son's military service, recruiting him into the State Military Reserve's chaplaincy corps.

Today, Chaplain Unger regularly volunteers about 1,200 hours each year ministering to the Soldiers at Daniel's infantry unit, now the 1-184th. Not content to bear their spiritual burdens alone, Marc recruited four more ministers and two chaplain's assistants into the state's chaplaincy program.

But it was an ex-con that ensured Daniel's legacy would carry beyond California. Jack Murphy - the surfing legend turned jewel thief turned prison evangelist - had grown close to Marc during their mutual ministry to inmates. When an artist friend in Florida told Murphy he was looking for a way to honor the families of Soldiers killed in Iraq, "Murph the Surf" beamed: "I got just the family for you."

"I believe in what our military is doing ... I believe they are dedicated to my life, to my safety, and I don't even know them," said artist Robert Gillilan, of Altamont Springs, Fla. "I just want to put a face on that."

The Unger family sent Gillilan everything they could that detailed their son's life, and the artist was quickly drawn into the Daniel Unger story. When the portrait was unveiled in January at the Ungers' church in Exeter, the overwhelming response further inspired Gillilan.

"(Daniel's painting) is stirring people to realize we need to honor them (the service members' families)," said Gillilan, who recently founded Artists Honoring Heroes, an organization through which he hopes to inspire other artists to create commemorative artwork. "I've had several people contact me and want to know how to sponsor me. I don't know how it's all going to work, (but) I'm honored."

"With this painting," said Marc, "it's the last piece of closure to a wound that never closes and never fully heals."



ARMY SCREENS 320,000 FOR POST-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH PROGRAM

As of March 2008 the U.S. Army screened its 320,000th Soldier as part of the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment [hyperlink to http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo/sm_fam/sm_fam_Army.jsp] (PDHRA) program. The U.S. Army began screening Soldiers – Active, Guard, and Reserve – in August 2005.

“PDHRA has been a major step forward in improving the care of our Soldiers,” said Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody.

“The program has proven its worth, and will be an enduring asset for the health and welfare of our Soldiers.”

Soldiers who returned from a combat deployment more than 90 days ago are eligible for the three-part screening. Soldiers who redeployed after March 10, 2005, are required to complete the PDHRA as part of the U.S. Army’s Deployment Cycle Support process.

“One of the most important aspects of PDHRA is that it educates Soldiers on his/her benefits and the resources available” stated Dennis Morgado, Chief Reintegration Office CNG, “A Soldier has the opportunity to speak to several agencies such as the VA or a grief counselor on a one-on-one no-pressure situation.”

The PDHRA program is part of the Army’s ongoing initiatives to safeguard both the physical and mental health of our Soldiers,” Cody said. “The most important aspect of the program is that it’s proactive and works to identify health issues before they worsen or become chronic conditions, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury so that Soldiers can get the treatment they need and deserve.”

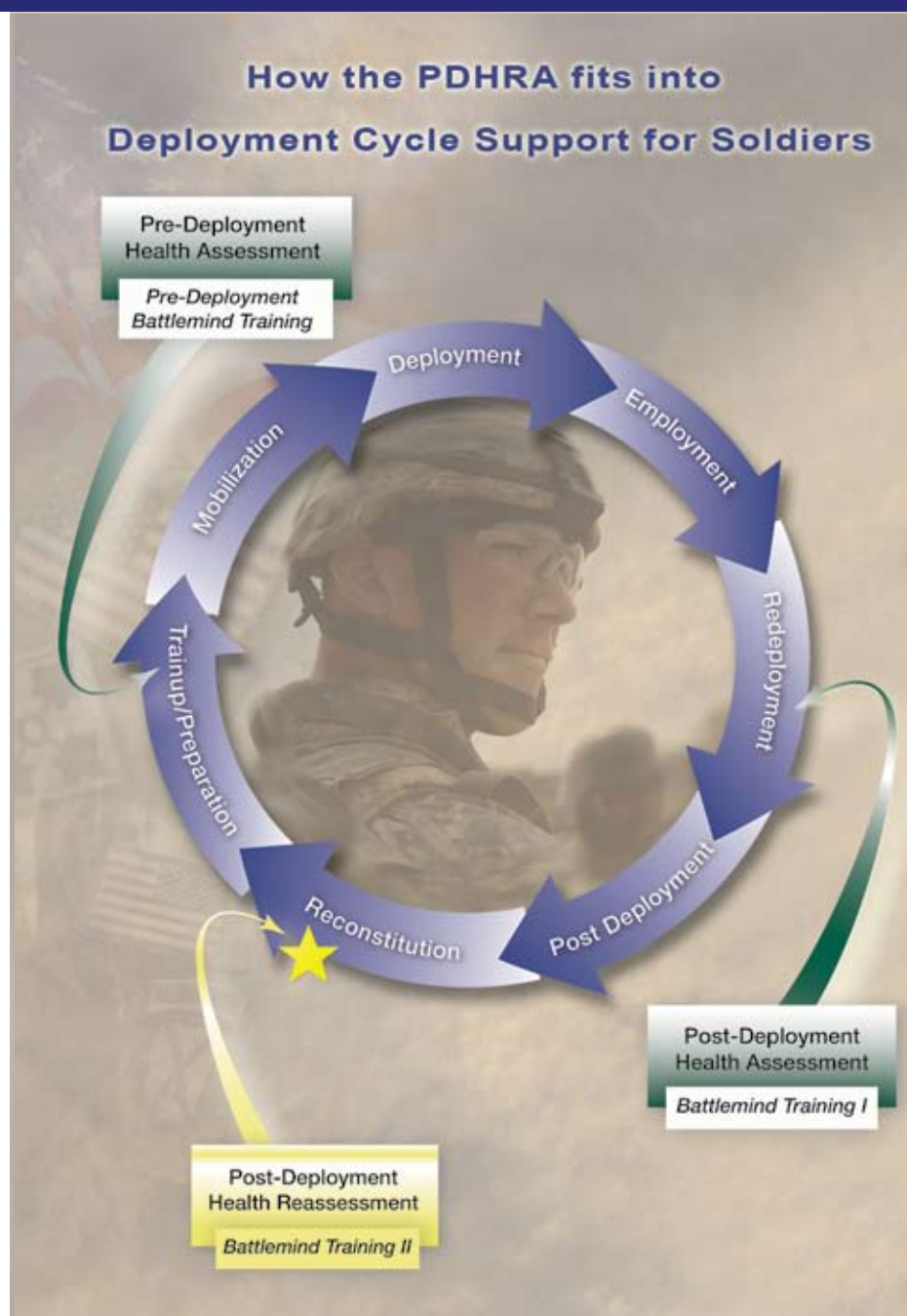
PDHRA is a Commander’s Program. Commanders and other unit leaders should access resources to assist them in scheduling their Soldiers for the PDHRA, found on the “PDHRA for Commanders and Leaders” www.us.army.mil/suite/page/200441 page in AKO (password-protected).

Most Soldiers complete the PDHRA as part of a unit-scheduled event 90-180 days post-deployment, and can track completion through Army Knowledge Online under “My Medical Readiness”.

A three-part process, Soldiers first take part in Battlemind II Training, which emphasizes safe and healthy personal relationships and teaches Soldiers to look out for each other’s health. Second, Soldiers fill out the DD Form 2900, a questionnaire that asks about physical and behavioral health concerns, and finally Soldiers speak one-on-one with a health care provider.

“The PDHRA is an opportunity for Soldiers to address health care concerns. The screening does not provide a diagnosis, but does provide follow up and additional care if necessary,” said the U.S. Army’s Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker. “Soldiers with stress problems may be reluctant to seek the help they need. The PDHRA bypasses this reluctance or stigma by bringing the medical system directly to the Soldier.”

For more information on the U.S. Army’s PDHRA program, visit <http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo>. Soldiers and Commanders can check PDHRA status in AKO under “My Medical Readiness”, or by clicking on the PDHRA Stoplight on their AKO homepage.



UPCOMING PDHRA EVENTS

May 10/11	Colton
May 17	San Jose
June 7	Sacramento
June 21/22	San diego
July 26/27	Los Alamitos

For more information
call 916-854-3222
or email
alejandro.strawn@us.army.mil

CNG Teen Adventure Camp

The Sixth Annual California National Guard Teen Adventure Camp at Camp San Luis Obispo is scheduled for 21 Jun through 27 Jun 2008. This is a fun filled week of military adventure training for Teens 13-18 to provide them the opportunity to see first hand what National Guard parents do when they are gone the one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year. Off base trips include Kaaking, Beach day, Vandenberg Air Base, Camp Roberts and Farmers Market, other activities include paintball, high ropes, climbing wall to name a few. Cost of Camp this year is \$100.00 payable at registration on 21 June. Teens are sponsored by any military personnel and up to 120 teens are accepted on a **"first come, first serve"** basis. Applications can be requested and accepted through Staff Sgt. Connie Mesta at connie.mesta@ng.army.mil or 562-795-1484. Deadline for submission is 13 June or until all slots are filled. Also accepting military and civilian volunteers.

TRICARE Information for Guard, and Reserve

Humana Military Healthcare Services offers a new online resource for National Guard and Reserve members. This resource explains TRICARE benefits for activated Guard and Reserve members and their families. Topics include: an overview of TRICARE; inactive duty status; benefits during pre-activation and activations periods; TRICARE for family members; TRICARE Reserve select; and behavioral health care services. The briefings may be viewed on Humana Military's website at www.humanamilitaryguardreserve.com/

Social Security Numbers Dropped from IDs

The Defense Department will no longer issue identification cards with full Social Security numbers. Plans are to remove the Social Security numbers from identification cards issued to military family members by the end of this year. Between 2009 and 2010, all department-issued identification cards will feature only the last four digits of a holder's Social Security number. New identification cards will be issued as they reach their expiration dates. TRICARE already removed Social Security numbers from its members' identification cards.

Army Goes Phishing, E-mail Style

More than 10,000 Soldiers, civilians and Family members with military e-mail addresses received an e-mail promising free tickets to area theme parks, with a link to a website that appeared to belong to the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC). The "phishing" expedition was developed by the Army Computer Emergency Response Team (ACERT) in a Global Computer Network Defense exercise to test the defensive posture of the Army LandWarNet and the response of all parties involved including the FMWRC. ACERT officials sent a follow-up e-mail to the recipients describing the exercise and apologizing for any inconvenience or false hopes raised by the e-mail. Anyone with questions or comments in the conduct of the exercise should contact the ACERT at 703-706-1113.

Wounded Warrior Pay Support Team

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has a team devoted to serving the needs of wounded warriors. Depending on a service member's personal situation, several entitlements may be starting, changing, or stopped during transition between the deployment and medical treatment. The Wounded Warrior Pay Support Team's mission is to provide accurate, real-time financial support to service members who are medically evacuated as a result of wounds, disease, or injury incurred while serving in a combat zone. Additionally, provide the critical human dimension of customer service to Wounded Warriors. Visit the DFAS Wounded Warrior Pay website to learn more at www.dfas.mil/militarypay/woundedwarriorpay.

California Encourages College Attendance

California officials estimate that only 14,000 veterans in California are using their Montgomery GI Bill benefits to go to college. Because of this, state officials have launched a program, Troops to College, to encourage active-duty military and veterans to use their benefits to improve their education. California State University campuses have also been told to become more veteran-friendly. For more information on California's Troops to College program, visit your local campus and educational services office, the California Department of Veterans Affairs Educational Resources for Veterans webpage at www.cdva.ca.gov/Resources/ or for the Troops to College Fact Sheet visit the California Department of Veterans Affairs education portal at www.cdva.ca.gov/vetsed

Did you know?

What happens at Annual Training doesn't necessarily stay at Annual Training?

What happens at Annual Training doesn't necessarily stay at Annual Training? Leaders at all levels must recognize and prevent fraternization and other inappropriate relationships to maintain fair and impartial leadership and maintain the integrity and moral compass of the US Military.

What is fraternization and why is it bad? Fraternization is an inappropriate relationship that exists between an officer and an enlisted service member. Fraternization can have severe negative consequences within the military. Favoritism is one of the first issues that arise when observing military personnel engaging in fraternizing behavior. All service members must feel that orders are given without prejudice or favoritism.

Fraternization can also break down unit discipline. When an officer or noncommissioned officer blatantly chooses not to follow a regulation, their subordinates will follow suit. In some cases, personnel in the unit will hold their regulation-violating seniors hostage by keeping "book" on their inappropriate actions. For example, using information to threaten the senior NCO or officer at a future date when a promotion or other positive action is at stake. This may sound outlandish, but go check with your local IG to find out how often this occurs.

So what are the rules? In general, officers and enlisted personnel cannot engage in relationships that compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of authority or the chain of command. For example, an officer or warrant officer of any rank frequently associating with or seen driving alone with, that hot new enlisted service member at annual training or on drill weekends is inappropriate. Personnel on Active Duty, including Dual Status Technicians, must also avoid situations where the perception that fraternization is occurring.

Fraternization leads to favoritism, indiscipline, and, ultimately, the breakdown of the professional standards that the US Military strives to hold in the highest regard. For more detailed Army Regulations, refer to AR 600-20, chapter 4-14 and 4-16 (For rules concerning inappropriate relationships between officers of different rank and for inappropriate relationships between enlisted personnel of different rank, refer to chapter 4-14.). For more detailed Air Force Instruction, refer to AFI 36-2909.

IN MEMORIAM

All Gave Some, Some Gave All

*This page is dedicated to the men and women of the California
National Guard who paid the ultimate price so that others may live.*

IN REMEMBRANCE 2001- 2007

STAFF SERGEANT DAVID PERRY (649TH MP CO)
SPECIALIST MICHAEL MIHALAKIS (270TH MP CO)
SPECIALIST ERIC RAMIREZ (670TH MP CO)
FIRST LIEUTENANT MICHAEL W. VEGA (CO A, 223RD MI BN)
SPECIALIST DANIEL P. UNGER (CO A, 1ST BN, 185TH INF)
FIRST LIEUTENANT ANDRE D. TYSON (CO A, 579TH ENGR BN)
SERGEANT PATRICK R. MCCAFFREY (CO A, 579TH ENGR BN)
SERGEANT QUOC B. TRAN (DET 3, CO B, 185TH AR BN)
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS MICHAEL OTTOLINI (CO A, 579TH ENGR BN)
CORPORAL GLENN J. WATKINS (CO B, 1ST BN 161ST INF)
SERGEANT TIMOTHY C. KISER (HHD 340TH FWD SPT BN)
SERGEANT ARNOLD DUPLANTIER II (CO C, 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
STAFF SERGEANT ALFREDO SILVA (DET 1 HHB, 1ST BN 487TH FA)
SERGEANT MIKE T. SONODA JR. (DET 2, CO D, 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
STAFF SERGEANT PAUL C. NEUBAUER (CO D, (-) 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DANIEL R. SCHIELE (DET 1 CO D, 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
STAFF SERGEANT JERRY L. BONIFACIO JR. (CO B (-), 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
CAPTAIN RAYMOND HILL (HHC, 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
SERGEANT SHAKERE T. GUY (CO D, 1ST BN 184TH INF (AASLT)
SERGEANT MARCELINO R. CORNIEL (CO A, 1ST BN, 184TH INF (AASLT)
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS ISAAC S. LAWSON (HHD, 49TH MP BRIGADE)
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RUDY SALCIDO (1114TH TRANSPORTATION CO)
SERGEANT DWAYNE YOUNG (CO C, 3RD BN, 160TH INF)
SERGEANT DENNIS LEE SELLEN JR. (HHC (-), 1ST BATTALION, 185TH INFANTRY)
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ARTHUR LAGUNA (BLACKWATER, USA)
SERGEANT RHYS W. KLASNO (1114TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY)

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